
Labor Party Must Be Formed:

Manifesto on the Cleveland Conference by the Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party.

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The Cleveland Conference for Progressive Political Action is at an end and the hopes of labor have again been betrayed. This conference was the outcome of the movement among the industrial workers and farmers for independent political action. The industrial workers and farmers have, during the years since the war, received heavy blows from the government. They have learned from their experiences that the government is an instrument through which the capitalists protect and advance their interests and which they use to fight against the workers and farmers.

The farmers have learned to know this from the legislation by the government which has made worse the exploitation from which they suffer. The industrial worker has learned it through injunctions, court decisions, railroad labor boards, and soldiers used against them in their struggles to maintain a decent standard of living.

The result of these experiences is that millions of industrial workers and farmers have voiced their demand for a political party which would fight their battles. They demanded a party representing the interests of the industrial workers and farmers to carry on their political struggles against the old political parties and against the employers and exploiters. This desire of the industrial workers and farmers was betrayed by a group of reactionary leaders at the Cleveland Conference.

Struggle at Cleveland.

The struggle in the Cleveland Conference was between a group of reactionary trade union officials aided by the Socialist Party, who wish to continue the policy of "rewarding the friends and punishing the

enemies of labor" on the Republican and Democratic tickets and the group which desires to realized the demand of the exploited farmers and industrial workers for an aggressive, militant political party of labor.

The representatives of the railroad unions were against the labor party. The representatives of the organizations of the well-to-do farmers did not want a labor party. The Socialist Party used its strength in the convention against the labor party.

This bloc played the part of the betrayers of the aspirations of the industrial workers in the Cleveland Conference. They organized a machine to control the conference. They used all the parliamentary tricks to gain their end. Through W.H. Johnston, President of the Machinists' Union, who was chairman of the conference, they headed off every effort to make the conference the means of realizing the fighting political organization which will fight labor's political battles.

These reactionary labor leaders do not want a labor party. The road to public office is easier through political deals such as the policy of "rewarding the friends and punishing the enemies of labor" on the old party ticket leaves open. They betrayed the interests of the exploited industrial workers and farmers in order to advance their political fortunes.

This group of leaders had participated in the LaFollette conference in Washington and they want to make the movement for independent political action by the industrial workers and farmers the tail to the kite of the ambition of LaFollette, Borah, and other so-called "progressives."

Industrial workers and farmers of the United States! You cannot win relief from the exploitation by the banks, the railroads, the coal barons and industrial magnates through another "progressive" movement.

The LaFollette-Borah “progressive” group does not represent the interests of the exploited farmers and industrial workers. It represents the interests of the middle-class, of the well-to-do farmers, and the small business men. Its policies are not “progressive.” It is a backward, reactionary group because it advocates policies which mean an effort to go backward economically in place of forward.

Should the group which betrayed the industrial workers and farmers at Cleveland gain political power, it would quickly become as great an enemy of the exploited industrial workers and farmers as the servants of the capitalists who now carry on the government machine in the interest of the capitalists. All these “progressives” want of the industrial workers and farmers is to use them as the means of gaining power — and then they will betray them!

The Socialist Betrayal.

Even greater than the betrayal by the Johnston-Stone-Keating “progressive” group at Cleveland was the betrayal of the industrial workers and farmers by the Socialist Party.

The Socialist Party claims to be a working class political organization. The Socialist Party claims that it is for independent political action by the industrial workers and farmers. In the past the Socialist Party has appealed to the workers and farmers to support it because it represents their class interests.

At the Cleveland Conference the Socialist Party representatives aligned themselves with the reactionary trade union leaders who were fighting the idea of a labor party. Morris Hillquit was the lieutenant of W.H. Johnston, chairman of the conference, in heading off everything which would help the advocates of the labor party.

The Socialist representatives sat quiet in the conference while the Workers Party delegates were denounced as “un-American and against the flag” — a form of denunciation which was leveled at the Socialist Party before they joined the betrayers of labor. The Socialist Party delegates gave no aid to the fight to seat delegates from local unions who would have helped the fight for the labor party. Morris Hillquit, as chairman of the organization committed the report calling for a form of organization which excluded the labor

party. James Oneal, another Socialist delegate, voted against the resolution calling for the formation of a labor party when it was before the resolutions committee.

In the final session of the conference the Socialist delegates introduced a statement declaring that they were not against the Workers Party delegates because they were “un-American and against the flag,” but because they did not believe in the method of democracy — the Socialists apologizing for American democracy after their experience at Albany when their representatives were thrown out of the state legislature because they were Socialists!

Industrial workers and farmers of the United States! The Socialist parties everywhere have shown themselves to be betrayers of the workers. Kerensky betrayed the Russian workers. Scheidemann betrayed the workers of Germany. In Italy the Fascisti rule the workers through violence and bloodshed because of a Socialist betrayal in time of crisis. The American Socialists, the Hillquits and Bergers, do not wait for the time of revolutionary struggle for their betrayals. They betray the workers at the first sign of independent action by the industrial workers and farmers, as in the Cleveland Conference.

The Fight for the Labor Party.

The struggle for the formation of a labor party in the Cleveland Conference was carried on by the Farmer-Labor Party delegates, the delegates from the Chicago Federation of Labor and other central labor bodies and state federations, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers delegates, and by the Workers Party delegates.

The Workers Party delegates were refused seats in the conference by the Johnston-Keating-Hillquit machine. It was known to this anti-labor party bloc that the Workers Party delegates would carry on an aggressive fight for a labor party, that its delegates would begin the fight at the opening of the conference and fight every inch of the way to the end of the conference.

Such a fight might have won the day even in this conference dominated by the Johnston-Hillquit machine. Through such a fight many delegates who were uncertain of the right policies for the conference

to pursue could have been won for the labor party. The delegates from the United Mine Workers, who played no important part in the conference, might have been compelled to take an open stand for the policy which their organization has endorsed. The delegates from some of the farmers organizations would have been brought into line.

But the reactionary machine knew the danger. They knew that if the Workers Party delegation sat in the convention they might lose in their effort to make the conference a tail to the LaFollette movement. They first tried to bar the Workers Party delegates by dodging the issue through not reporting their credentials and when forced to take a stand Chairman Johnston railroaded a decision of the credentials committee to bar them without giving the delegates a chance to act on the question.

Although the Workers Party delegates were barred, their influence upon the conference was not eliminated. The Workers Party literature voicing the demands of the industrial workers and farmers for a labor party was in the hands of the delegates. The Workers Party program for a labor party was presented to the delegates to contrast against the ridiculous "progressive" legislative program adopted by the betrayers of the labor party.

The Labor Party Will Come.

Industrial workers and farmers of the United States! The struggle at Cleveland was only the first skirmish in the battle for the Labor Party.

The life experiences of the industrial workers and farmers which have aroused the demand for independent political action will make the demand louder. The use of the governmental power against the workers and farmers will yet arouse such a powerful movement for the labor party that it will sweep all the reactionary leaders and betrayers of labor from its path.

The Cleveland Conference shows that the labor party has already won the approval of a large section of the industrial workers and farmers. The strong group

which fought for the labor party in the conference will continue its fight. The Workers Party will continue to give all its strength and militant leadership to the fight for the labor party.

The Workers Party calls upon those workers who wish to help build a powerful mass political party of the farmers and industrial workers and to help give such a party a revolutionary leadership to join the Workers Party and fight with it for the labor party.

The Workers Party calls upon the industrial workers in the trade unions to voice their demand for an independent political party of labor in such terms that the reactionary leaders of their unions will not dare longer obstruct the movement for a labor party.

The Workers Party calls upon the farmers to place their organizations on record for the labor party, for independent political action for the farmers and industrial workers against their common exploiters.

Industrial workers and farmers! The labor party is a milestone on the road to better things for the industrial workers and farmers. The labor party must be formed if the struggle against those who amass great fortunes out of the labor of farmers and industrial workers is to be won.

The past political movements of the industrial workers and farmers have been lost in the mire of "progressivism." This time labor must build its own party for a winning struggle against its enemy.

Forward to the Labor Party!

Down with "progressivism" and the betrayers of labor!

Forward to the Workers' Republic and the Rule of Labor!

**Central Executive Committee,
Workers Party of America.**

C.E. Ruthenberg, Executive Secretary.

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